



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 23rd November 2015 at 6.30 pm
in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP

ADDENDUM

The following item although provided for on the agenda front sheet was not available at the time of dispatch:

7.	UPDATE ON BENEFITS ACCURACY RATE (PAGES 5 - 6) To receive an update from the Senior Client Officer on the benefits error rate.
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Yours sincerely

Jon McGinty
Managing Director

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area. For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and

- (b) either –
- i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

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For general enquiries about Gloucester City Council’s meetings please contact Democratic Services, 01452 396126, democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk.

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- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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Agenda Item 7

Accuracy Checks in Relation to Housing Benefit Assessments Follow-up following Audit Committee on 21st September 2015

Performance for year

The performance following previous committee is as follows:

- September 14.18%
- October 11.81%
- November (to date) 10.08%

Members requested further information on the financial impact to the customer. We have analysed the errors in September and October and found the following:

Month	Minimum Error	Maximum Error	Avg. Weekly HB	Avg. Weekly CTS
September	1p	£102.58	£38.85	£7.62
October	18p	£89.99	£44.77	£5.17

Actions since last Audit committee

Following the last audit committee we have continued to work with Civica to review results of checks and consider changes that could be made to improve the results of performance.

The issue of performance has been discussed at each monthly operations board with Civica and they have continued to work closely with the client team. Civica acknowledge the performance is low and although this was not included as a KPI in the contract they have been working to improve it.

We are aware that a technical problem between systems has prevented the Risked Based Verification of claims from working. This increases the work load for the assessor and increases the likelihood of errors occurring, due to increased documentation to check. This problem has been resolved in November and we expect to see this have a positive impact on the rate.

Further changes to process have been made; results of the client team checks are now going back to the individual assessors. Previously these were given to the quality officer and only general trends were fed back to the assessors. This change has highlighted the errors to the assessors quickly and they are more engaged in the process and are now having weekly meetings regarding their performance.

It is important to note that following the initial review of the 10% Accuracy QA process within the client team the changes made have allowed the officer to keep up to date with the checks. Although this doesn't alter the accuracy rate, it does mean the errors can more quickly be corrected by the Contractor and a number of errors can now be picked up pre-payment

Benchmarking

Below shows how other Council's are performing.

- Forest of Dean (Civica outsourced) rate is generally around 9% error
- Cheltenham have advised an experienced assessor would achieve around 7% error*
- Stroud have sent stats from April that range from 5%-10% - averaging at 7.5%.
- Bexley Council (outsourced service) averaging around 10%

* Bench marking has shown us that Cheltenham have taken a view that a weekly error of £3 or less (HB&CTS) will not be included as a Financial error (it is still shown as an error).

We have analysed the result of September and October to apply the Cheltenham method and our accuracy would improve by:

- September 3.49%
- October 2.39%

Next Steps

We will continue to monitor the rate carefully to ensure improvement is achieved. We will achieve this by, having a rolling item for the agenda at the Operations board so that everyone is aware of the rate. Ensure the client team remains up to date. Civica will issue guidance to assessors with regard to errors and continue with working with each assessor on training and performance monitoring.